

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

*by Joe McMoneagle*

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*How can I deal with the fear I have during an Out-of-Body Experience?* This is a question asked by many people who have just begun experiencing the Out-of-Body (OB) phenomenon. Of course, the old hands out there quickly respond, "Fear? What fear?" But that's only because you guys can't remember back far enough. You know... to when you had your first separation. Well, there's nothing wrong with anybody who encounters anxiety in the early days of experimentation. Almost without exception, most do.

But why? Maybe it has something to do with suddenly waking up, suddenly becoming aware. You have your first recognition that you are OB and... zip! Suddenly, there you are—aware, cognitive, awake. All of a sudden, you know without a doubt that you are OB. At that precise moment in time, you are abruptly confronted with a new experience, a new stimulus, a stimulus for which no response yet exists. There is a total absence of background knowledge... the reaction file is empty. Our mind is unexpectedly blank. There is only a large empty hole, a hole which, only moments before, was filled with good old logic-oriented coping mechanisms: physical reality coping mechanisms, that is.

And that's not all. Your rapid-fire, first-cut analysis of the new input defies all previous reality constructs. You might have talked about it before, but suddenly to be there? An alarm goes off in the back of your consciousness. It bleeps loudly, "NO BOUNDARIES, NO LIMITS, NO KNOWLEDGE, NO WAY—GET ME OUT A HERE!" Bang . . . you're back in the body, heart racing, breathing heavily, eyes wide open. You have just experienced the fight-or-flight response. Your mind's still saying over and over, "Can't fight what I don't understand, so... I'm outa there."

And... there's more! The round, smooth experience of being OB has been quickly jammed into the first available cognitive slot—albeit a square slot. You know in your heart that the

experience doesn't fit in the slot, and this only intensifies the initial fear reaction. Let's look at a couple of examples of what we are talking about:

1. During the OBE, a sudden presence of an opposite-sex energy-being is perceived as sharing the same space with you. IMMEDIATE REACTION: (Woman) "I suddenly felt this male energy pressing in on me, invading me," = FEAR. (Man) "I suddenly felt as if I were completely engulfed with a female presence. It was almost smothering, overwhelming," = FEAR. The reality is that it's simply a new input never perceived before, like suddenly finding yourself completely immersed in a more total self, a self whose gender is equally male as well as female, a totally homogenized being: YOUR SELF.
2. You awake in the OB state. You see your body lying on the bed and are suddenly overwhelmed with a fear that you can't get back into your body. "I saw my body on the bed and thought that I might have died, that if I couldn't get back immediately I would die," = FEAR. The reality is that you've just never been consciously aware while outside your body, or you've mistakenly come to connect separation of consciousness from body with death—a belief which limits who and what we are to the confines of a physical representation.

There are a number of other examples that could be given, but what we are essentially talking about here is fear of the UNKNOWN. What can we do about it? There's a lot, but I have to use a further example to illustrate. In other words, I have to sneak up on you.

There was a period in my life when I spent a great deal of time on my grandfather's farm in Georgia. Over a number of early childhood years, I went to the farm almost every summer. Always, on the day of my arrival, my grandfather warned me never to go around to the back of the farm house under any condition. But he never told me why. This is not unlike many of the cultural, social, or religious requirements learned over time. Nothing's ever specifically said, but we are left with a feeling that something dreadful will happen, should we violate the condition. And there are many of them. In this case, it was DON'T GO TO THE BACK OF THE FARM HOUSE!

Well. One day, when grandpa wasn't looking... zip! I must have been doing three miles an hour on my short, six-year-old legs when I hit the open cesspool. I'll let your imagination fill in the details.

This, of course, doesn't mean that the OB experience is something to be avoided. Just the opposite. You see, in the back of the house was also a wonderful strawberry patch, with a hole

in the fence that I quickly discovered. There was a large, live oak tree I used to climb. I could see Stone Mountain from the top branches. And the rear of the backyard bordered a watermelon patch that was perfect for raiding in later years.

I guess what I'm trying to say is, the first experience was objectionable. It was totally new and terribly frightening. But once I understood what it was and its boundaries, my exploration blossomed. That was many years, countries, and millions of miles ago. I've never regretted the initial zip around to the back of the house. In fact, I've sometimes wondered what the effect might have been had I not zipped.

Respect the OBE for what it is—a new experience. If you encounter a fear reaction during an OBE, record it... talk about it with someone... think about it. Try and define its limits and boundaries. Then test it, challenge it, confront it. I think you'll be amazed at the results.

*Please note: The dictionary defines “consider” as “to ponder,” and “to weigh in the mind.” In “Questions to Consider,” Joe may not always give the kinds of responses one expects, but you can count on him to consider your issue in his inimitably provocative fashion.*

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